

(hey, haven't we heard this one before?). Then someone gets the none-too-bright idea of holding a seance. Bad move, kids. Before long, two of the girls are possessed by the spirit of an evil demon and return to the party to wreak havoc on their friends. Obviously inspired by *The Evil Dead*, this straight-to-video nonsense is enlivened by some good special effects and the raunchy presence of low-rent scream queen Linnea Quigley.

Much the same type of plot turned up way back in the 'Swinging' 60s in a silly little movie called *The Haunted House of Horror*. This starred beach party favourite Frankie Avalon as a 30-year-old teenager who says to his mates at Halloween: "Let's all have a haunted house party". So off they go to a remote old mansion where evil doings have occurred in the past and after about twenty minutes of wandering around in the dark one of their number is viciously slashed to death with a jagged-bladed Kukri knife. The chief suspects include pop star Mark Wynter and Richard O'Sullivan (of *Robin's Nest* and *Man About The House*) sit-com fame, so you can tell that dramatic realism is not a keynote here. The queen of Halloween in America is Elvira (aka Cassandra Peterson), the TV

horror hostess whose popular stage show has done a lot to keep the spirit of this haunted

holiday alive. She made her movie debut in *Elvira - Mistress of the Dark* (New World), a jokey affair in which Elvira inherits a haunted house in the staid New England community of Falwell. Her presence there causes major consternation to the prim and proper locals until she whips up a batch of magical casserole that causes them to lose all their inhibitions and indulge in a wild orgy! Elvira is a cross between Mae West and Morticia of *The Addams Family* and with chest measurements that would overload a pocket calculator she looks like she would probably fit very nicely into a Russ Meyer film! Finally CIC are bringing out a collection specifically for the big night and, although the action doesn't actually take place on Halloween there's still scares a plenty in Stephen King's, *Pet Semetary*, the first bunch of *Tales from the Crypt* (check out our Sneak Preview

COMPETITION

10 CIC HALLOWEEN PACKS TO BE WON

As it's the time of year when Stuart Kirkham and all things unholy come out to play we're giving you the opportunity to have a Halloween to remember. CIC have given us 10 triple packs of terror to give away comprising of *Tales from the Crypt*, *Pet Semetary* and *The Serpent & the Rainbow*. You could win a set if you can tell us which Wes Craven film starred current teen fave Johnny Depp. Answers to: Help I'm On A Package Holiday From Hell Comp., Video World Magazine, The Northern & Shell Building, PO Box 381, Millharbour, London E14 9TW. The Dead Line is October 20th



for some more on the second series) and a former VW classic, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*.

So, that's about it, the witching hour approaches and my word-processor is about to change into a pumpkin! Any of the above-mentioned movies are highly suitable for Halloween night viewing, or better still you might prefer to really get into the spirit of things and go trick-or-treating your neighbours - providing you don't live next door to a loony bin. Here at *Video World* we have our own way of celebrating: we all clamber on to the Ed's broomstick and nip off to a wild party somewhere. You're invited as well, of course. It's at the usual address in Elm Street - the last house on the left...

TALES FROM

Heh, heh, heh, gore fans, prepare yourselves for a mouth-watering assortment of terror tales coming your way from some of the genre's leading boys 'n' ghouls.

In 1954, comic book publisher William M. Gaines was called before a Senate Sub-Committee, where an irate politician held up the current edition of a Gaines comic called *Tales From The Crypt*. The angry politico ranted: "The cover of this magazine shows a man with a bloody axe holding a woman's head up, which seems to have been severed from her body. Do you think that is in good taste?"

Gaines thought a moment before replying, "Yes sir, I do, for the cover of a horror comic. A cover in bad taste might be defined as holding the head a little higher so that the blood could be seen dripping from it."

The scene was repeated in England a short while later, where a furious MP held up another copy of the 'despicable' Gaines mag which had a story in it about a baseball team who took revenge on a cheating player by dismembering him and using 'his long strings of pulpy intestines' to mark the base line for a midnight game! "This certainly isn't cricket" pointed out the worthy fellow, proving he knew more about sport than what constituted a good horror tale.

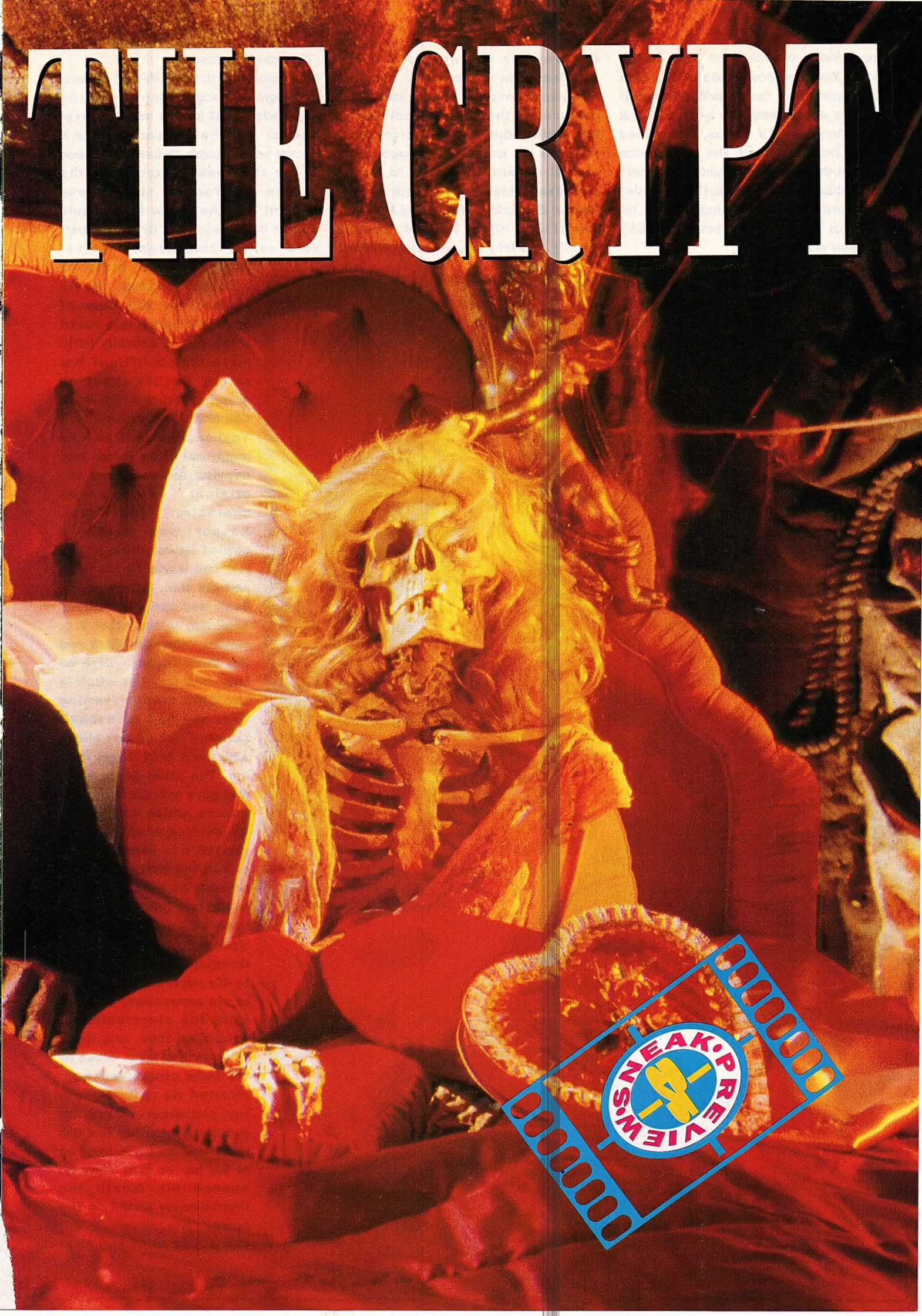
Gaines' E.C. company (E.C. originally stood for Educational Comics, then later became Entertaining Comics) were now notorious for their graphic terror tales, later described by no less an authority than Stephen King as "a horrific layer cake of terror on top, horror below, and lowest of all, the gag reflex of revulsion."

This notoriety led to the creation of the Comics Code Authority, designed to protect youngsters from horrific imagery. It brought with it the collapse of Gaines' comic book empire. But E.C. didn't fade into obscurity. They returned from the grave to have the last ghoulish laugh, like most of the characters in their stories.

The English company, Amicus, made two



THE CRYPT



successful movies from them in the early 70s, and now some of the best yell-yarns from those lurid 50s horror comics are forming the basis of a hot new American TV series, also called *Tales from the Crypt*. The big surprise is that these shows (which were made for cable rather than heavily censored network TV) actually manage to do justice to the blood-soaked grand guignol originals.

But perhaps it's not such a big surprise when you consider some of the names involved. For a start, the producer of the show is Joel Silver, the action king who produced *Die Hard*, *48 Hrs* and *Lethal Weapon*, and top directors involved in early episodes include Robert (Back to the Future) Zemeckis, Walter (48 Hrs) Hill, Tom (Fright Night) Holland, Howard (Pretty in Pink) Deutch, and Richard

(The Omen) Donner.

Each story features different actors, but there is a regular introduction by a ghastly ghoul known as 'The Crypt Keeper'. In the Amicus movies a human actor (Ralph Richardson) stood in for the cackling crone of the comics. But for this show it was decided that the horror host should run on batteries: 'The Crypt Keeper' here is an animatronic marvel designed and built by effects wizard Kevin Yagher for the sum of \$150,000 (which may sound a lot, but is actually little more than a fifth of the money Yagher spent on creating Chucky, the devil doll from *Child's Play*).

Yagher says that he was happy not being forced into copying the design of the original comic book character: "The Crypt-Keeper was merely a cowed figure with a jutting jaw and warts on his nose and his chin. It was no big deal, and the alternatives available in the other E.C. comics - the Old Witch and the Vault-Keeper - were no improvement. The witch is the only creepy looking one: she had an eyeball hanging out of her skull, and she'd hold it out from her. The other hosts were just guys with slime in their mouths, which was boring. We decided what we really wanted was something so emaciated that it couldn't possibly be a human being. In the end I settled for the look of an insane, dead warlock."

Bringing the Crypt-Keeper to life required the services of six puppeteers, three to work the electronically-controlled face, and three to work the body. Most of the facial expressions were directed via radio control: one puppeteer worked the eyes while another had the head mechanism hooked up to his jaw so that when he opened his mouth the Crypt-Keeper would do the same.

The success of the first



three shows in the States led to the commissioning of a further 22 episodes, most of which will be coming our way soon. Here's a sneak preview of some of the more intriguing shows: *Lover Come Hack To Me* (directed by Tom Holland) is a gore-filled tale of two honeymooners which ends with one of them returning from the grave wielding an axe; *Only Sin Deep* (directed by Howard Deutch) stars Lea Thompson as a murderous female who makes a deal with the devil to regain her lost looks; *Collection Completed* (directed by *Pet Semetary's* Mary Lambert) stars popular character player M. Emmett Walsh as a man who takes up taxidermy for a hobby, but after playing the wife's favourite cat, he ends up as the subject of her sawdust and needles!

Cutting Cards is another Walter Hill-directed episode, with Lance Henriksen as one of a pair of compulsive gamblers who become obsessed with a game called 'chop poker'. This involves chopping little pieces off the loser's anatomy! Further episodes are also being directed by Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese and Joe Dante.

Budgets for each of the 25-minute episodes came in at around the half-million dollar mark, making them some of the most expensive shows ever created specifically for the small screen. Added to this was another half million spent on the show-stopping and very impressive opening sequence where the camera barrels up a hill and into the inner recesses of a creaky gothic castle in one apparently uninterrupted swoop. "If we were doing a \$30 million movie we could not have made a more sophisticated or compelling opening" explains effects ace Richard Edlund, who accomplished the sequence

using miniatures, blue screen work, rotoscoped animation, and just about every other trick in the trade. Of course a lot of money was also spent on the Steven Spielberg *Amazing Stories* anthology series, and it didn't prevent the majority of these from turning out to be duds. But the

word is out already that *Tales from the Crypt* is the best TV horror series ever, with very few disappointments among the episodes aired thus far. If it does justice to the EC originals then it's got to be a must see for blood 'n' guts buffs everywhere. You can expect to see further

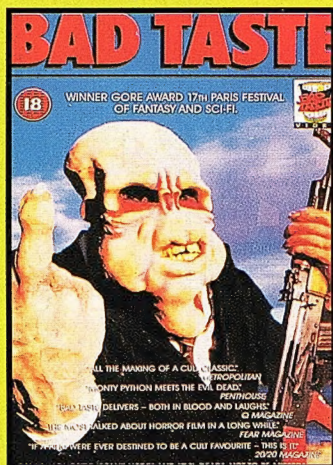
collections turning up on the CIC Video label very soon, and there are approximately 550 E.C. stories out there still waiting to be adapted. We'll leave you with the closing words of our old friend the Crypt-Keeper.. "Stay tuned, kiddies, the beast is yet to come..."



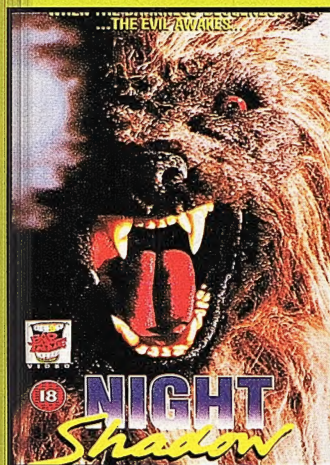
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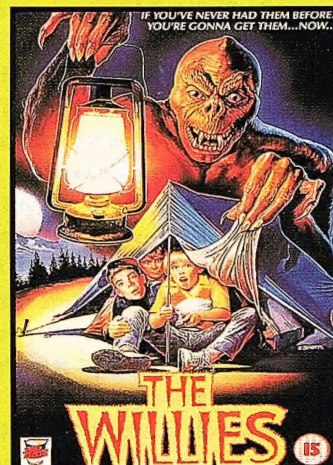
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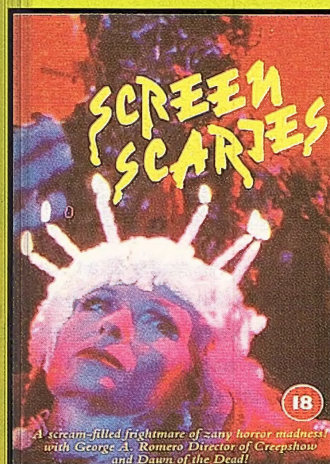
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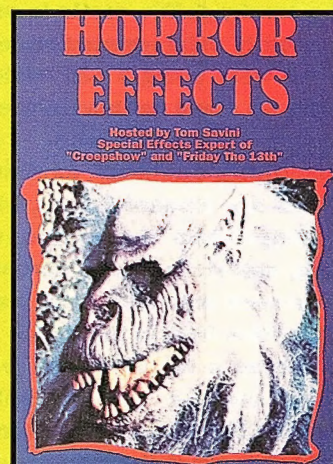
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